



TRANSCRIPT

Announcing Funding Opportunities under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs

Act June 29, 2022 at 12:00 ET via GoToWebinar

Hosted by NOAA Office of Communications

News release

[Biden Administration announces historic coastal and climate resilience funding](#)

Webpage

[NOAA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Webpage](#)

0:05

Good afternoon, everybody, my name is Lori Arguelles. I'm the Director of Strategic Communications here at NOAA, and I would like to start by thanking you for joining us for this announcement today. I'm pleased to be welcoming the Department of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo. Along with NOAA Administrator, Rick Spinrad and other members of NOAA Leadership, who will be speaking shortly. We're going to be talking about the funding opportunities under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In addition to the two wonderful faces that you see before you at this moment we're also going to be hearing from our Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Janet Coit and our National Ocean Service Assistant Administrator Nicole LeBoeuf and we're also going to be hearing from our Senior Advisor for Climate Ko Barrett. So we'll begin with remarks from our speakers and then of course, we want to hear from you.

0:57

So, after the questions - after the presentations, rather - we'll open up the webinar for questions. So, if you would like to ask a question or offer feedback, you can click the icon in the GoToWebinar window next to your name, and NOAA staff will call on each participant who has virtually raised their hand, and then your line will be unmuted. You may have to unmute yourself, too, so be on mute patrol. You can also use the questions tool in the GoToWebinar window to type a question if you don't want to raise your hand.

1:28

Please do be sure to state your name, title, and organizational affiliation when you're asking a question. And with that organizational housekeeping out of the way, let me turn it over to NOAA Administrator and the Commerce Department Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Dr. Rick Spinrad. Thank you, Dr. Spinrad. Yeah, thank you, Lori. I appreciate that. And Secretary Raimondo, thank you so much for joining us today. We look forward to a very fruitful discussion and we're obviously very excited about the announcements and the rollout today. So, delighted to have you joining us. I will say welcome from Lisbon. I'm here with the US. Delegation at the UN Ocean Conference, where I'm delighted to say the United States has a great, strong representation being led by Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry.

2:23

This particular conference is being hosted by Portugal and Kenya.

2:28

And we, at the Department of Commerce, are one of the strongest components of that delegation, along with our colleagues, from the State Department. The conference, just by way of references is scaling up solutions to some of the biggest challenges that we're facing in the oceans, which is why I'm particularly excited today with this announcement. Because there's a consistency between what we're doing domestically with these programs and what's happening here in the global arena, the United Nations conference.

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It's fair, in looking at these issues, to set up the situation by pointing out that our planet is completely being touched by climate change.

3:04

There's no part of the planet that's not being touched by climate change, and we feel these effects

daily. 3:09

We feel in terms of excessive, unprecedented, heatwaves. We feel it in terms of extended

droughts. 3:15

We feel it in terms of more severe storms and more intense hurricanes. We also see rising sea levels and flooding around our country.

3:24

We are there, at NOAA, with you every day.

3:27

We're observing, we're forecasting, we're predicting, we're putting products and services out all the

time. 3:33

And then, we're also analyzing our products and services to make sure we're improving those services for decision makers, industry, governments, and local communities.

3:44

Those unique capabilities that we have really make us, the authoritative source in the Federal Government, for weather and climate information, and our mission, as we address these challenges, is really what makes us committed to making the United States a Climate-Ready Nation.

4:03

As you'll hear in a moment, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides NOAA with an historic opportunity to help ensure that our coasts and climates and rest of the community is climate ready, that our fisheries and protected resources are resilient.

4:18

And that our climate data products reflect the needs of decision makers and are responsive to the requirements throughout the land.

4:26

This is an all-hands-on-deck moment in the Commerce Department and for our agency. Every one of our NOAA line offices is playing a key role in the deployment of the nearly \$3 billion in funds that are going to be available over the next five years as a result of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

4:44

Through these notices of funding opportunities that you're about to hear about and in partnership with you, we're going to continue to make a difference for coastal communities and for ecosystems across the country by prioritizing and funding, what we believe will be some transformational, high impact projects that will yield multiple benefits.

5:04

They're going to support sustainable fish populations. They're going to reduce damage from flooding. 5:10

We know these will create jobs and other economic opportunities. And to hear more about how we'll do this, it really is my pleasure to turn the mic over to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo. Before I turn the virtual podium over to her. I just want to highlight a few things about Secretary Raimondo's leadership of the Department and within the Administration.

5:30

We have never had a stronger advocate at NOAA for our role in this regard.

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As the former governor of the Ocean State, we've got somebody on board who really understands the issues and knows how to invoke action to support those. The Department's priorities and NOAA's priorities are more strongly aligned than

ever.

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5:49

And I can say that as somebody who's held four jobs in this agency, and seen a variety of different administrations that NOAA has worked with.

5:58

The Secretary's embrace of NOAA and unique role within the Department, is allowing us to explore opportunities, partnerships, like never before - both internally, with other bureaus in the Department, and also with other agencies, and also with outside partners, and industry and academia, and local communities.

6:17

So, we're very excited about our ability to engage with investment from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds. Because I think it's going to demonstrate the effectiveness of this leadership team, and the leadership that Secretary Raimondo has provided to the Commerce Department. With that, Secretary Raimondo, the floor is yours, and I know you have limited time with us today. I'm eager to hear your comments. Thank you.

6:42

Thank you, Rick. That was a very kind and warm introduction, and I appreciate it and thank you for being part of the delegation over there representing the U.S. at the UN Ocean Conference. I know you're doing a great job. As Dr. Spinrad said, it is true, I care deeply about the work at NOAA. In fact, when President Biden called me and asked me to take the job, I suggested that the job should be renamed to Secretary of Commerce and Oceans. Secretary of Commerce and Oceans because NOAA is almost half of what we do here at the Commerce Department.

7:17

And it's important that we focus on the work that we do related to our oceans and

atmosphere. 7:24

So, the conference theme, "Save our ocean, protect our future", I think, is a perfect frame for what we're talking about today.

7:33

I mean, the reality is you can't do either of these things - saving the ocean, or protecting our future - without addressing climate change.

7:42

Now, as Rick said, prior to this job, I was the Governor of Rhode Island.

7:46

Rhode Island is called the Ocean State. It's a tiny state - smallest state in America - with 400 miles of coastline. 4

7:54

And I know firsthand that climate change is having a direct, significant, negative impact on the ocean, resulting in warming and sea level rise. And at the shore, wetlands and marshes are becoming inundated, which breaks down nature's defenses against things like severe storms, flooding and hurricanes.

8:16

It's amazing to me, how many people still say to me, ask me, "Can we really afford to spend the money to meet the climate challenges?"

8:28

And the fact of the matter is, we're already paying for this climate crisis, and it's getting

worse. 8:36

You know, in the eighties, the average time between billion-dollar climate disasters in the United States was about 82 days.

8:46

Today, it's 18 days.

8:49

Every few weeks, we have a climate-related event or disaster that costs billions of dollars.

8:57

That is expensive. That we cannot afford. That hurts our communities, our people, and our economy. 9:04

So what do we do? How do we address this challenge?

9:08

We know that infrastructure needs to be climate-smart, climate-ready, and climate-resilient. 9:14

And we know that decision makers everywhere need to be using the most up-to-date data on climate.

9:22

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We use data to guide every major decision we make, and the same is true for climate.

9:28

We also know that we need to boost preparedness and resilience so that communities all across America can be ready for the extreme weather events, which we know will happen.

9:41

So today, I'm so proud to announce the nearly \$3 billion investment that NOAA is making, thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to do just that - to get us ready, to prepare, to help communities be more resilient.

9:57

Our plan and our strategy and I've worked with Dr. Spinrad and his team to craft this, is to use the funding to really go big - to make transformational investments.

10:09

And we're going to do it in four key areas: coastal resilience and restoration, marine debris prevention and removal, climate data and services, and fisheries and protected resources.

10:22

With this investment, as I said, we will fund transformational projects at scale. This is more money than we've ever had to do this. It will help communities and ecosystems take the necessary measures, make the infrastructure investments to be able to withstand the extreme weather events, which we know are coming.

10:42

We will improve and expand NOAA's climate data and services, which, as I said earlier, are used, relied upon by communities and businesses of all sizes to make critical decisions daily.

10:55

We're going to be providing funds to remove marine debris, to protect our ocean and support ocean-based industries, like travel and tourism.

11:06

And we'll protect fisheries to support both ecosystems and the commercial and recreational fishing

industries. 11:13

In Rhode Island, we have thousands of people who make their living as commercial fishermen.

11:19

For them, it's more than a job. It's a way of life.

11:22

It's been in their family for generations, and it is at risk, unless we move more swiftly to clear marine debris. 11:30

I'd also like to note that NOAA is using funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to engage partners in a whole new way.

11:40

We have a whole new emphasis on including and reaching out to underserved communities and tribal communities. 11:48

It's a first-of-its-kind effort, and we're doing this in all of our work, so that everybody is included. 11:55

These efforts will help us build, as Dr. Spinrad says, a Climate-Ready Nation.

12:01

And we're looking forward to partnering with all of you through these funding opportunities, learning from you, funding your initiatives to make this vision a reality.

12:10

So , Dr. Spinrad - You lead a visionary team at NOAA.

12:14

And I feel lucky for your service and their service.

12:18

And one of the folks who you lead is Janet Coit, who's the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. 12:25

I've had the pleasure of working with Janet for almost seven years now; she's among the most dedicated professional public servants I've ever known. And I'm going to turn it over to Janet to tell us more about some of these key investments.

12:42

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Thank you, Secretary Raimondo. Thank you very much. Yes, we worked very closely with partners across Rhode Island when Secretary Raimondo was Governor, and really appreciate your long standing commitment, and fierce support for nature based infrastructure. And to helping make sure, making sure it's implemented in a way that supports our nation's coastal communities and their goals.

13:06

We know how the funding that we're announcing today will support those local goals from our states, or tribes, and disadvantaged communities, and I can certainly vouch that when Secretary Raimondo puts forward a call-to-action, meaningful work gets done expeditiously. She's a powerful ally and we're really fortunate that the Commerce Secretary is at our side and pressing us forward as we implement the Infrastructure Act at NOAA.

13:33

This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in habitat restoration.

13:38

This new funding provides critical support for our nation's fisheries and for protected resources. As well, it strengthens the resilience of coastal communities and ecosystems; and that helps them mitigate, persist and thrive in the face of many stresses. This is so important. In fact, these announcements could not have come at a better time.

13:59

Climate change impacts every corner of our science-based conservation and management mission at NOAA and of our nation.

14:08

The complexities of climate change, and the need to adapt to an ever-changing ocean environment will continue to challenge our efforts to manage, conserve and restore sustainability for years to come.

14:19

So this funding will help us as we confront the immense challenges associated with climate change. 14:26

We will be able to provide capacity and support new capacity for resource managers and stakeholders to assess and reduce impacts, increase resilience, and adapt to these changing conditions.

14:39

Earlier this month, NOAA released two notices of funding opportunities for fish passage in our nation's coastal rivers - also, part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

14:49

One provides up to \$65 million to support projects that re-open migratory pathways for fish around the country. 14:58

This funding will go a long way.

15:00

These projects assist in the recovery of our endangered migratory fish and our nation's fisheries, and improve habitat for all species in our river environments.

15:10

They provide community and economic benefits for culture, jobs, and climate resilience.

15:16

The second fish passage funding opportunity is up to \$12 billion for tribes to implement fish passage work and to build tribal organizational capacity.

15:25

This funding was developed with input from the Indian Tribes, through virtual listening sessions, and written comment period. That input was so important in shaping this program.

15:37

So let me turn now to the transformational habitat restoration funding opportunity, up to \$85 million to support transformational projects that restore coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems using approaches that enhance community and ecosystem resilience.

15:54

This opportunity will enable projects to happen that people have been working on for decades. And, finally, for the first time, we're announcing a new funding opportunity to support capacity building and habitat restoration activities that enhance the resilience of underserved communities. These communities know what they need to do, and we're providing them funding to build the capacity to do it.

16:18

Before I close, I want to preview one more exciting Infrastructure Funding Initiative, and that's our Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund grants.

16:27

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This year, we completed an additional \$34 million in Infrastructure Act funds under the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, which is a very popular program. The projects that we are recommending for funding will represent a scale of impact we could never have achieved without these infrastructure funds. Again, transformational.

16:47

They'll support more tribal projects. They'll have an emphasis on estuarine and near-shore habitat restoration, which is critical to climate resilience in our coastal ecosystems - our most productive ecosystems- and we anticipate announcing this year's awards soon.

17:04

Like you, I care deeply about fish and marine habitats and people who depend on them.

17:08

We're all striving to be better stewards of the Earth and to leave things better than we found them. 17:15

That seems very challenging right now.

17:18

So we so appreciate the support of the Secretary, the President, and the Congress. We have to work together. 17:24

And these funding opportunities we're announcing today, give us momentum and allow us to achieve our mission. 17:33

So let me now turn to my wonderful colleague, who's also in Portugal with Dr. Spinrad, Nicole LeBoeuf, who's the head of the NOAA Ocean Service.

17:43

Thank you, Janet, for emphasizing the importance of those transformational fish passage and habitat protection

projects that we aim to undertake, particularly those in partnership with underserved communities and tribal governments.

17:57

I'd like to now highlight funding opportunities in support of NOAA's priority related to enhancing coastal resilience. 18:04

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Prosperity in our coastal communities has a large impact on our nation's overall well-being, and not simply because nearly 40% of the American population lives in coastal counties.

18:15

Even for those who live farther inland, it's nearly impossible for any one of us to go a single day without eating, wearing, or using something that hasn't come from a supermarket or shopping mall by way of our coasts. Add to that the impacts of climate change, and coastal resilience becomes even more essential to our nation's resilience.

18:35

Through these funding opportunities, we aim to support both.

18:39

Today, I will speak about two funding opportunities that support NOAA's goal of building a climate-ready coast. 18:45

First, by promoting coastal resilience and strengthening habitats in collaboration with our state and territorial partners, the National Coastal Zone Management and National Estuarine Research Reserve Programs, and second, by reducing the impact of marine debris on ecosystems and our economy by removing some of the most damaging debris and stopping accumulation of new debris.

19:08

As we look back at five decades of the Coastal Zone Management Act, this historic funding offers a transformational opportunity to make investments that will protect and restore critical coastal and estuarine habitats.

19:22

These special ecosystems provide critical natural infrastructure that supports coastal communities by protecting them from storms, and other coastal hazards. Forests, floodplains, dunes, and wetlands support productive fisheries, recreation, and our vibrant coastal communities.

19:42

These projects will help restore habitats and help people become more resilient as we engage underserved communities, to make sure their voices are an integral part of the visioning, leadership, and decision-making of restoration and conservation projects.

19:58

I can't think of a better way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Coastal Zone Management Act than through investing a total of \$55 million in these projects and programs.

20:09

Today's announcement also includes funding for transformational projects to address marine

debris. 20:14

As marine debris accumulates, it causes serious problems for the environment and for

people. 20:20

Discarded plastic bags, bottles, food wrappers and other items that we use on a daily basis can harm wildlife, clog waterways, and keep tourists away from littered beaches.

20:31

In addition, large marine debris can be an eyesore and especially damaging for vulnerable habitats that we depend upon for protection from storms like coral reefs and mangroves.

20:42

A targeted funding opportunity being offered through NOAA's Marine Debris Program will make up to \$56 million available to reduce the impacts of marine debris by removing the largest and most damaging debris and by preventing re-accumulation of debris in the environment.

21:00

Additional funding opportunities from NOAA Sea Grant will invest up to \$16 million to address the problem of marine debris through innovative research and community partnership that drives local action.

21:13

Projects funded through these opportunities will improve the resilience of the coastal and marine environment and local economies, enabling them to more readily bounce back in the face of future storms, and other natural disasters that often result in large amounts of marine debris.

21:30

When we clean up our coasts and the ocean, we support healthy marine ecosystems and prosperous communities for us all.

21:38

That's because healthy ecosystems are more resilient to change, which will allow them to continue to provide vital services to coastal communities and the nation.

21:48

To help put all of this in context, I'd like to turn now to Ko Barrett, NOAA's Senior Advisor on Climate and Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

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22:00

Thank you, Nicole.

22:03

These funding opportunities represent a significant milestone in NOAA's efforts to accelerate the whole of government effort to address the climate crises.

22:12

Today, Janet and Nicole have shared opportunities for funding and technical assistance for a range of efforts, and notably, we've heard about projects to restore healthy habitats for fish as well as new opportunities to restore or expand coastal wetlands, barrier islands, reefs and more.

22:31

By improving, restoring and expanding our natural infrastructure and ecosystems, we don't just benefit these ecosystems, or just enhance habitat for fish or other wildlife.

22:43

Actions like these also serve to increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change.

22:49

Communities across the United States, especially in coastal areas, are experiencing more extreme weather events due to the impacts of climate change.

22:59

Increasing and strengthening our natural infrastructure is critically important to providing services such as storm protection and flood reduction, which protect communities from the negative impacts of these events.

23:13

At the same time, many of these efforts serve to increase carbon sequestration, helping to mitigate future climate change. And, speaking of mitigation, we also heard about opportunities to engage with NOAA on offshore wind energy.

23:28

We know pursuing renewable energy is a critical component of addressing the climate crises - specifically the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is the United Nations body for assessing the science of climate change, an organization for which I serve as vice chair- we recently found that limiting warming to the level set by governments to reduce the risks and impacts of climate change, requires a substantial reduction of most fossil fuels and getting almost all of our electricity from no or low carbon sources, like renewables.

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24:03

Together, these efforts demonstrate how NOAA is working to build a thriving nation whose prosperity, health, security, and continued growth, benefit from, and depend upon a shared understanding of and collective action to reduce the impacts of climate change. And this is what we're calling a Climate-Ready Nation.

24:23

In alignment with this vision, there's a common thread of ensuring equity across the opportunities discussed today. 24:30

Too often, we fall short in meeting the needs of underserved communities.

24:34

And, I think the focus demonstrated today, serves as an important step forward towards strengthening our efforts in this regard.

24:42

And fundamentally, we are hoping to build a Climate-Ready Nation that builds and strengthens partnerships, which is why we're so thrilled to have the opportunity to engage directly with so many stakeholders today.

24:58

While the announcements that we're making today are significant, there is so much more we need to do, and we know we cannot accomplish this vision without extending our capacity through partnerships. More broadly, these important

opportunities represent NOAA's commitment to meeting the international call for urgent action on climate change.

25:18

And as many of you are already aware, the most recent IPCC report concluded that we're not yet on track to limit global warming to the level set by countries for the critical decades to come, and that the time for action is now.

25:33

At the same time, every recent IPCC assessment has repeated the refrain that every fraction of a degree of warming matters, meaning that every single action to prevent that warming can make a difference.

25:46

And I believe the opportunities for discussing with you today can be a step in the right direction, and really, I'm really excited to talk with all of you about how we work together to meet the moment.

25:56

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Now, let me turn this back to Lori to facilitate our conversation and questions from the audience.

Lori? 26:03

Thank you so much Ko, and I invite you to keep your camera on and ask Janet and Dr. Spinrad and Nicole to turn their cameras on as well. We've been talking a lot and now we're excited to hear from you. So it's your turn. I'm going to give you reminders about how you can ask questions in just a moment. But I did want to let you know that in addition to the people you see on the camera here today, that we do have some subject matter experts available, who we may be calling on, including Joelle Gore, Carrie Robinson, and Nancy Wallace and Jon Pennock. As well as Eric Locklear, who's been the guy behind the scenes, pulling all the pieces together. So thanks to all of them. and Dr. Spinrad, as we take questions, feel free to call on those folks. They're not currently on camera, but they can certainly join us as needed.

26:59

And also, I'm going to have a little help from my colleagues, Bob Nadeau, and Jennie Lyons, who will be assisting in making sure that your questions are seen and heard. And so, let's get to it. Just to remind everyone, if you would like to ask a question, please click the hand icon in the GoToWebinar window, next to your name and the attendees list that appears to the right of your screen. You will be called on if we see you having a virtual hand raised. Once you're called on, your line will be unmuted. You may need to unmute your line and I'll ask everybody else to just go on mute, unless you are speaking. So, you can also use the questions tool in your GoToWebinar window to type a question for NOAA leadership.

27:52

Please be sure to state or type your full name, organization, title, and ask your question. So, with that, let me see, Bob. Do we have any, any folks with hands raised?

28:05

Thank you Director. As Lori mentioned, please raise your hand if you have a question. But, none at the moment, in the verbal questions. But, we do have a few in the chat box, I'll send that over to Jennie.

28:19

Thank you. Our first typed question today comes from Corina Fuentes with WeAct for Environmental

Justice. 28:26

Corina asks, "How do you define coastal community?"

28:34

Sure, Corina, that's a great question. So for the purposes of the statistic that I noted earlier, that nearly 40% of the population lives in a coastal county; that is a county jurisdiction. But, oftentimes, when we think of our watersheds and the environments that are affected by the coastline and the coastal processes, we tend to think of about 60 miles from the coastline. And that really does vary based on the program. There is probably a much more specific answer out there in regulation, but I'll say that that's a general rule.

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29:11

Thank you, Nicole.

29:12

Our second question comes from Sean Goldsmith. Sean asks, "will there be any new grant opportunities revealed with this fundraising that is specific to habitat restoration for tribal communities?"

29:30

Yeah. So there's - The short answer is there are opportunities for tribal communities. So, Janet, if you want to talk a little bit about that, I also know we've got Carrie Robinson on the line as well, but if you want to take a first cut at that, I'll throw it over to you.

29:46

Yes, certainly.

29:48

Thank you. Yes. So I mentioned our Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund Grants.

29:54

Many of those which we're announcing later are going to be for tribal projects.

30:01

As well, there is specific funding for our Fish Passage Notice of Funding Opportunity that is dedicated to tribes although they may apply for both pots of money. In that case, there's \$15 million specifically for tribal projects for fish passage. And then, of course, the habitat restoration funds are available to tribes with the capacity building grants for underserved communities, which, in some instances, may be tribal communities.

30:30

So in each of the funding pots habitat restoration and fish passage, I think there's a particular opportunity as well as, as I mentioned, how much we appreciated the input from tribes as we put together a fish passage notice of funding opportunity.

30:50

Thank you. Our next question comes from Kay Ehas of Groundwork Jacksonville. And Kay asks if she will be able to get a recording of this webinar? And the answer to that is yes. So, our next question after her comes from Michele Jalbert with Providence Resilience Partnership.

31:11

Michelle asks: What opportunities will there be for climate resilience, assessment and planning so the investments can be prioritized for greatest impact?

16

31:23

Ko, you want to take that one for response?

31:32

Sure, sorry to take some time to unmute. Yeah.

31:36

I mean, we recognize that there is a great need to have assistance for climate assessments and planning. And, in fact, are cognizant of the tremendous demand that we hear from all segments of society.

31:51

I mean, if you think about it, the U.S. has 30,000 communities, all of whom are looking to prepare for climate impacts in one way or another. So, we intend to kind of advance some of the programs we have in NOAA. So we have regional programs that do that kind of work. We have also some national level activities that support that. But, honestly, in order to really meet the demand, we have to do this in partnership with you and our stakeholders in order to make sure that we are targeting the right information that communities actually need to serve their particular priorities and needs.

32:32

So we have some opportunities that we're working through; Sea Grant, for example, but we'd be happy to kind of come back to you with some specifics that are in keeping with the details of the question that would be most useful to you.

32:50

I'd like to jump in real quick - when it comes to marine debris, one of the emphases that we're placing in the Notice of Federal Funding Availability is availability for funds where states and regions already have plans in place, ones that they have developed, and they're ready to execute. And so, that's a really nice way to use their good work to leverage these dollars, and, and really hear from them on what's needed. So, we're looking forward to seeing how their implementation goes.

33:23

Our next question comes from Laura Bowie. And Laura asked if we can post the web address from the previous

slide. 33:29

Laura, you will find that web address in the chat box. So our next question after that comes from Jeffrey

Scott. 33:37

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Jeffrey asks, "Will microplastics be considered as part of your marine debris removal since they are bioconcentrated by filter feeding mollusks and shellfish?"

33:55

Yeah. I know we've got Nancy Wallace from the marine debris program on the call here. Nancy, Do you want to go online? There you go. Good. Thank you so much for the question. It's a great question. Because microplastics are such an important component of the Marine Debris problem. And it's something that we are absolutely addressing in a number of ways. This particular notice of funding opportunity is focused on the large-scale marine debris- so really things, like abandoned and derelict vessels, derelict fishing gear that are causing significant impact for ecosystems and communities right now. So that's where the focus is. And then hopefully some prevention activities, as well. That being said, we're doing lots of great microplastics work, I should say. And I'd be happy to follow up with the questioner if that would be helpful.

34:40

I know we've got Jonathan Pennock and part of marine debris piece is through Sea Grant. Jonathan, do you want to add anything to Nancy's comment?

34:49

Thanks, Rick. And yes, indeed, thanks for the question. I mean, microplastics are a huge problem. We know, we've known that for a while. There was a recent National Academy of Sciences study that doubled-down on that and really focuses on that.

35:02

I know with the Sea Grant, transformational of the larger piece of two different opportunities. We have microplastics are called out as one of the critical items, not the only, but one of those.

35:14

So, yes, how we address microplastics, what their impacts really are, and how we can remove, and really, I think, much of it is going to be keeping those microplastics from getting into the ocean is going to be critical. Thanks for your question.

35:35

Our next question comes from Amir Behzadan, who is a Professor at Texas A&M University.

35:41

Amir asks, "Can you comment on when the BAA will be out, and the general timeline of proposal submission, review and decisions?" Also are the caps on the proposed budget per project and project duration, or are there proposed caps on the proposed budget per project and project duration? Thank you.

36:02

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So, Eric Locklear has taken the lead on development of a lot of logistics and details associated with the release of these announcements. Eric, do you want to take that question?

36:14

Sure, absolutely. Thanks. So that is a great question. And as we speak, all of the Notice of Funding Opportunities have been posted to our, to the government's web portal, grants.gov, which explains in very, very detail exactly how to go ahead and apply for one of these grants. It describes the range of funding possibilities. It also describes the required documentation that needs to be submitted with those proposals. So I think anyone wishing to apply to any of our announcements today, just go on grants.gov, do a quick search for NOAA, and you'll be able to find out everything you need.

36:59

Thanks. Our next question comes from Daniel Hayden, President of Restore America's Estuaries. And Daniel asks, "Are there specific funding provisions or initiatives to support blue carbon?"

37:14

So I'm going to take a first shot, then I'm going to let Nicole go.

37:17

And we may want to go to others on the call, but I will tell you that, certainly with the attention on blue carbon, we're interested in looking at aspects of that. My feeling is that that's not specifically called out in the coastal resilience solicitations here.

37:37

I'd be curious what folks might be thinking in terms of the role of blue carbon as a component of coastal resilience. So I'm gonna go a little bit out on a limb and say, based on my last reading, there's nothing that precludes thoughts on using blue carbon approaches.

37:57

But as I recall, we do not have specific language soliciting those kinds of proposals. I'll turn to Nicole or others on the call here, to see it, if they want to correct me in my interpretation.

38:09

I'm gonna say generally that, that's correct.

38:12

That specific terminology is - my recollection. But of course, just providing funds for these coastal ecosystems is an acknowledgement of their ability to not only have protective value and ecosystem services that include the sequestration of carbon, for millennia, really. So these areas, it's not coincidental that these areas have been singled out for these

19

restoration projects. And if that is incorrect, I'm happy to hear from Joelle Gore because she probably knows this, inside and out. Joelle, do you want to comment?

38:55

Hey, there, thanks to you both. And I'll invite Carrie to add in anything different from the Fisheries Service opportunity, but for the opportunity from the Coastal Zone Management Programs as well as the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program, that is exactly correct.

39:11

Blue carbon is not called out specifically, but we know that the work that will be done will have an impact. Thank you both.

39:23

So, let me just add that what you see in the NOAA component of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, so, a lot of emphasis on resilience and adaptation.

39:34

Less, so, an emphasis on the mitigation side. But the government, in general, is putting a lot of effort in mitigation. So, I want to make sure that our answer is put in the broader context of what the Climate Policy Office of the National Climate Task Force are doing writ large. Mitigation is absolutely a key component- emphasis here is on adaptation and resilience.

40:00

Our next question comes from Denise Savageau and she asks, "Will funds be available for land protection and easements, for example, to protect coastal habitats, or area for marsh migration or coastal forests?"

40:17

I'm curious, I want to give Joelle a chance, because that's a very specific question to comment. Joelle- are you still with us here?

40:29

I am still with you. Hello? Yes, hey, there I am still with you. But I'm gonna call on my colleague Carrie Robinson on this and see if she wants to take it.

40:44

Carrie? Could you read that question again? It was very specific. I want to make sure I'm being accurate in how I'm responding.

40:51

Sure, will funds be available for land protection and easements? Then, she says, for example, to protect coastal habitats, or area for marsh migration or coastal forests.

41:05

So I'm going to say it depends. That's a great question; it's a nuanced question. And so I think we would want to sit down and talk with you about exactly what you're hoping for from the project. It certainly can be an aspect of a larger project. But I would want to sit down and talk through those nuances.

41:24

So if you can get her name, we can work with you to make sure we're answering that

accurately. 41:31

Yeah, thank you, Carrie, I'll echo that.

41:33

And just say real quickly that for the funds available to coastal zone management programs and reserves, that we are including land conservation and acquisition, which includes easements as well- conservation easements, as well. But I think again, as Carrie stated, there's some specifics in that question, that probably deserve further thought and follow-up.

42:02

Susan White, Director of North Carolina Sea Grant, says, "These are fantastic opportunities for supporting local communities. How might these significant NOAA resources be coordinated across the NOAA family in federal system and within states to equitably distribute funding across the nation?"

42:23

So, you know, I actually want to go to Ko on this one, because that question is so important to us, and Ko gave a great description of what we're trying to do with Climate-Ready Nation. We see this investment as a critical piece of the big picture.

42:37

Certainly NOAA's effort toward Climate-Ready Nation, is bigger than what's in this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and we've done some things within NOAA to coordinate internally that we hope we're being seen among, for example, the Sea Grant network and others. But, Ko, I'd welcome your take on that question, please.

42:56

Sure. Well, I mean, one thing I'll say is, I've been working on climate issues for over two decades now, and there's never been a time in Federal Government that is quite like what we, the opportunity we have now.

43:09

Across the whole of government, we are focused on climate change, we are coordinating, and I can't even count the number of inter-agency working groups that were participating in. And, and so that allows us to coordinate in ways we haven't, before on say, on things like drought, fires, flooding, coastal protection, extreme heat.

43:32

And within NOAA, the creation of my position actually is, first and foremost, intended to work across all of the line offices within NOAA to strengthen our climate response.

43:46

We believe that we provide core climate services that span our entire mission space from working within fisheries to help folks to understand how fish stocks are shifting.

43:59

In response to climate change in the ocean to our forecast suite of products that we put out operationally with the Weather Service, but also a number of products and services we provide experimentally and in the research space.

44:15

So, I mean, I think, you know, this is just an amazing time to be kind of working on these issues within NOAA and where we see the Climate-Ready Nation initiative as a way to kind of coalesce our forces and deliver services to the nation in a way we haven't previously. I don't know, Dr. Spinrad- did you want to add to that?

44:37

I think that's exactly the right kind of message we could go on and on.

44:41

But I would add that, kind of riffing off the question; the theme that Ko alluded to is something we're taking outside the agency, too. So, Ko alluded to the inter-agency working groups. But, at NOAA, we're also reaching out to stakeholders in an extraordinarily diverse set of communities.

45:03

The medical community, a variety of industries, tourism, agriculture, architecture, insurance, and re-insurance. 45:15

And it's the same ideas that we want to make sure that there's a great integration, both the needs. 45:21

45:34

Many of which Ko alluded to. May I add just briefly, that, in response, also, that geographic distribution, and the types of diversity of partners - they will be part of the selection criteria.

45:49

So I think you'll see when you check out the website, you know, how these different funding paths may fit together. 45:55

But we're available, and our regional folks, to make sure that we give outreach and feedback across the nation, because we do expect these programs to have a national scope, and want to see, you know, as many communities as possible benefit.

46:12

Yeah, thank you, Janet.

46:16

Rick Magder of Groundwork Hudson Valley asks, "Will funding be provided to clean up trash and floatables from smaller tributaries and creeks that flow into estuaries through many EJ areas?"

46:31

So, again, I think I might throw that one over to Nancy on the Marine Debris Program.

Nancy? 46:38

Yes, that's another great question. One of the priorities in the marine debris funding opportunity focuses on trash interception. So what we try to do is, if you can capture the trash before it gets out into the open ocean, it's just much easier to collect and remove. So, that is a component of this funding opportunity through the marine debris program.

47:05

Fredrika Moser asks, or says, "It is exciting to hear this strong commitment to transformational work to address the climate change crisis. This is an exceptional opportunity afforded us by Congress with this funding. There are, however, many institutional challenges to addressing transformational work and change. Could anyone care to speak to how we might best work collectively to overcome some of these barriers across government?"

47:36

Yeah. I mean, that's - if we have another three hours, we could probably have a great discussion on that topic. I will tell you that, in general, you've heard some reference to the tools that are new in this administration for doing that.

47:50

We do have this extraordinary array under the leadership of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, to coordinate efforts, especially in development of new climate products and services.

48:08

Coastal resilience is one of those working groups, and in fact, Nicole co-chairs that particular working group. So those offices and those efforts are providing the forum, if you will, for overcoming some of the barriers that I'm inferring that you're alluding to.

48:28

I'll also add that there are some barriers associated with the priorities of this

administration. 48:36

For example, this administration has made clear that we will conserve 30% of our lands and waters by 2030. This administration has also made clear that we will build 30 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030.

48:57

That means we need to think carefully, for example, about offshore wind in the context of establishment of marine protected areas, at the same time, building out and leasing lands for offshore wind development, renewable energy development; So in that case, that requires some extraordinary relationships, for example, between NOAA and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

49:24

Janet Coit has been our lead in working a lot of that, because what we're trying to do in the administration is demonstrate that we can juggle the responsibilities we have for being environmental stewards, with our effort to support the build out of this burgeoning offshore wind industry. So I hope I'm getting to the gist of your question.

49:46

There were some government efforts to try to coordinate this. If your question is more along the lines of the mechanics of getting funding out the door and dealing with the braided funding of, say, state resources and other community resources, I actually feel pretty comfortable through demonstrated capabilities through things like our RISA program and Sea Grant Program, that we know how to do that pretty well.

50:19

But I open that up to any of the other participants or if you've got additional perspectives that you want to add to that question.

50:26

Yeah, I'd actually like to add something, Dr. Spinrad, if I could, because, because, I think, Freddy, you're right. I mean, the

kind of transformation that's required to address the climate problem is on a scale that we've never actually seen before globally. Nationally, the kinds of changes that we'd have to undertake to transform society to a no, or a low carbon future is, is enormous. And sometimes it feels potentially, too big, to solve at the national level.

50:58

But that's why I think that a lot of the investments that we're making available through this law help us to target community-level transformation, which, let's face it, folks are on the front lines in our communities. So these types of grants actually enable us to target a scale that is motivational to people taking action. It feels small enough that we can get our hands around the climate problem. And I actually think support for those frontline communities is an important piece of the entire puzzle.

51:37

Well, and I will also just say that I recently met with the Mayor's Group of the American Flood Coalition. These are the folks on the ground that have to deal with really tough decisions about limited resources in their communities for these daunting challenges. They're aware, of course, of the infrastructure law and knowing that these funding availabilities would come out soon. We really did talk about the barriers that they have. We are very sensitive to that.

52:06

These funding announcements are, as Ko said, really trying to get into communities and to build durable capacity in those communities, so that when these funding opportunities are over, there are folks there in those communities that can pick up and implement the next one, and the next one, the next one, because we really know that that's where the work has to get done, so we can hear you on the barriers and the difficulties. And I will say another thing, co-chairing this inter-agency working group on coastal resilience. One of the most important jobs we have is to know what one another is doing and leverage complementarily, what each of the agencies are doing.

52:47

At every one of those meetings, we talk about barriers to communities being able to take up large grants, small grants, this kind of thing. The other kind of thing, because every community is different.

52:59

And we are having those really robust conversations, highlighting nature-based infrastructure as a solution to these climate problems, particularly where flooding has been an issue. So we are actively engaged, and I really appreciate the acknowledgement of those barriers because they're definitely out there.

53:18

One last quick thought as I was listening to Ko and Nicole comment, and that is, the barrier that keeps me awake at night in terms of coordinating resources is the emerging economic sector of commercial climate services.

53:34

I've met with almost 40 of these new businesses, and that's a very viable important component of the solution. We haven't quite figured out yet where - I call them the swim lanes- in public sector or private sector - in terms of the provisions of these products and services. We will but that's gotta be an important aspect of this discussion, as well.

53:57

I can just interject, I think, on a practical level, there's also an emphasis on technical assistance for folks in a way that there maybe hasn't been in the past. And, Jennie, I think we have time for one more question before we need to close out. So thank you for being such a great reader of questions.

54:15

Of course, I'm happy to. So our next question comes from Rebecca French, with Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. And she says, "We're thrilled to see all of these new programs announced today, especially the focus on underserved communities. I'm concerned, however, that there has only been a limited expansion of the CZM staff capacity to work with all of the new grantees under these programs. How will NOAA further assist states with state staff capacity for climate resilience?"

54:49

That's a great question. We all have limits, and these resources, even though these are historic. We know how important it is, not only to have our own internal capacity, but a partner to handshake with these opportunities there - in each of the states. I'm going to turn it to Joelle because she speaks to states day in and day out.

55:09

And I think she'll be able to really get to your question.

55:14

Yeah. Thank you so much for the question.

55:17

We will be, as I think, you know, for Coastal Zone Management Programs and National Estuarine Research Reserve Programs, offering non-competitive funding to help build capacity for your programs in order to better position yourselves, to better engage with your communities and underserved communities to help prepare you to do the work and to execute these funds.

55:45

Likewise, in the competitive project funding itself, we are open to engagement funding under those competitive applications for engagement and outreach with communities.

56:00

So, not only are we supporting this through the non-competitive funding, but also those activities and responsibilities through project competitive funds.

56:18

Thank you, Joelle. That brings us, essentially, to the close of our time together. Really appreciate all of those great questions. I think, Dr. Spinrad, let me turn it back over to you for some closing thoughts. Thank you, Janet. Thank you, Ko. Thank you, Nicole.

56:34

And we will put up the website address so that you can continue to learn more. So, Dr. Spinrad, let me turn it over to you. 56:48

Yeah, thank you, Lori. I'll be very brief because it's getting late, it's almost the dinner hour here in Lisbon. I just want to thank everybody for participating. I want to thank the whole NOAA team for engaging. As many of you know, there are a lot of people at NOAA who have worked very hard to get these announcements out, and who will work equally hard to get resources out, and to work with communities, to make sure we are delivering - both on the promise from NOAA and on the expectations from Congress, as they passed a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Several of you have alluded to the historic nature of this. I will share with you that I have been in Washington a long time. When I was a young program manager, somebody whispered in my ear, and they said, "Remember, there's no new money."

57:35

Well, this is actually new money.

57:38

These are resources we didn't have before, and represent an extraordinary opportunity for us to demonstrate strengths of NOAA and the strengths of our partners in delivering on this promise. So, with that, I want to thank you all again.

57:53

I wish you the best and I look forward to further developments and seeing you all out in your environments and seeing the impacts of these programs. Thank you.

58:03

Thank you so much, Dr. Spinrad. And just to close things out, I want to thank you all again for participating in today's announcement. We appreciate the input from our subject matter experts and our speakers. I'll remind you that a recording of today's announcement will be online shortly. Our press release about this is available on NOAA.gov in the news section.

58:25

And we also really encourage you to visit our website at noaa.gov/infrastructure-law. I think we might have a slide where we can put that up and I'm going to repeat it again.

58:44

It's noaa.gov/infrastructure-law. Finally, if you do have any questions, please contact our team at NOAA.communications@noaa.gov. That concludes today's announcement, and we thank you so much for joining us.

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